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Hereford

Tel

Sir Christopher Kelly  
Office of Standards in Public Life  
35 Great George Street  
LONDON SW1P 3BQ

BY FAX AND POST

Dear Sir,

28 April 2009

The Prime Minister and the House of Commons seem quite unable to construct a regime to allow fair and reasonable expenses to MPs. Many people are furious about the existing system and its abuse by most MPs to line their own pockets.

May I suggest the adoption of the existing civil service expenses system? MPs are servants of the public, carrying out their official duties at public expense. There is no reason why they should receive more than civil servants' allowances and expenses.

That means a fixed allowance to stay overnight in London only where duty requires it, reimbursement of travel, mileage and subsistence within prescribed limits and a small daily 'out-of-pocket' petty cash allowance for minor items where away from 'home' for most of the working day. No paid-for second homes, no John Lewis list for furnishings and no payment for anything without submitting receipts.

Further, let's stop MPs employing family as staff. Thousands of civil servants are necessarily about to be made redundant and three of these (say an executive officer and two clerks) should be allocated to each MP 'free of charge', with any further staff required by the MP to be paid for from his/her own pocket. The MP's London office is effectively 'free' and the constituency office should be funded on a receipts basis.

You should requisition a respected and independent private-sector auditor to go back over the past 20 years' of all MPs expenses claims and assess all those claims, to decide exactly which fully complied with the spirit of public service and the rules current at that time. The ancient concept that Parliament is 'sovereign' in its own administration is nonsense, especially when Mr Speaker Martin ("in charge") is so incompetent and should have resigned on at least three occasions in the past year.

After the independent, expert audit, the sitting or retired MP should be issued with a repayment demand and/or a tax bill for every unwarranted payment they have received or profit they have made. If they are unable or unwilling to pay, the amount due should be deducted from their sumptuous pension, or a land registry charge levied against any property that was funded by the taxpayer, to recover any profit accruing from the misuse of taxpayer's funds.

Yours faithfully

P SKELLORN

Copies:

Gordon Brown MP, Prime Minister, Labour  
David Cameron MP, Leader, Conservatives  
Nick Clegg MP, Leader, Liberal Democrats  
Mr Speaker Martin, House of Commons